

**2015-2016**  
**Academic Year**  
**Annual Program**  
**Evaluation**  
**University**  
**Partnership**  
**Program**

**April 2017**

Developed by the Institute for Human Services for the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program



# Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Statewide Student Trajectory	4
Placement Counties	5
Hiring Counties	6
Cleveland State University	7
Ohio University	8
The Ohio State University	9
University of Akron	10
University of Cincinnati	11
University of Toledo	12
Wright State University	13
Youngstown State University	14
Child Welfare I Course Analysis	15
Student Focus Groups	16
Points of Action	26

## Introduction

Founded in 2002 the Ohio Child Welfare University Partnership Program is a partnership between the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Public Children Services Association, and the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program. The program's intent is to develop a pool of social work graduates, who are well-qualified to work in child welfare. This annual evaluation includes findings from a three-component process evaluation:

1. An examination of the trajectory of a UPP student;
2. An examination of the implementation fidelity of the Caseworker Core Revisions for the Child Welfare 1 Course; and
3. An examination of program quality from the student's perspective.

## Methodology

### UPP Database

Data was extracted from the UPP database in January of 2017. Each of the eight Campus Coordinators enter the following data into this web-based tool:

- Application information for each applicant
- Field placement start date, agency, and field placement supervisor for each student
- Date of graduation, degree awarded, and required employment start date for each student
- Start date, employing agency, employment supervisor, for each UPP graduate
- Program completion status or termination information for each UPP student

### Document Review

Syllabi from each participating university's Child Welfare 1 course was collected and reviewed. Syllabi were examined for consistency in each of the following areas:

- Content topics
- Order of content delivery
- Assigned readings
- Course assignments

### Focus Groups

During the spring semester of 2016 the OCWUPP coordinator conducted focus groups at each of the eight universities with students who were in the program. The purpose of the focus groups was to gather information about all facets of the UPP and to identify areas for CWUPP improvement. The facilitator asked open-ended questions on these topics:

- Program recruitment strategies
- The process in place for admittance to the program
- The students' reasons for enrolling in CWUPP
- Child welfare course work and integration with field placement
- The field placement experience
- The role of the campus coordinator
- Career plans



## Students Since 2002

835  
Total  
Students  
Admitted

90%  
(n=750)  
Students

79%  
(n=660)  
Students  
Graduated

71%  
(n=466)  
Graduates  
Hired

51%  
(n=338)  
Graduates Com-  
pleted Program  
Commitment

# University Partnership Program

**87**  
Students enrolled  
in UPP in  
2016-2017

## 2015-2016 Cohort

80  
Students  
entered the  
Program

83%  
(n=65)  
Students  
Placed\*

85%  
(n=55)  
Students  
Graduated\*\*

75%  
(n=41)  
Graduates  
Gained

\*Only Seniors and MSW students are eligible for placement. Students in the junior program are not placed until their senior year.

### Students placed in 22 counties:

- Athens
- Belmont
- Cuyahoga
- Fairfield
- Franklin
- Fulton
- Gallia
- Geauga
- Greene
- Guernsey
- Hamilton
- Lucas
- Mahoning
- Montgomery
- Muskingum
- Perry
- Preble
- Shelby

### Graduates hired in 17 counties:

- Ashland
- Athens
- Cuyahoga
- Fairfield
- Franklin
- Fulton
- Geauga
- Greene
- Guernsey
- Hamilton
- Lucas
- Mahoning
- Montgomery
- Richland

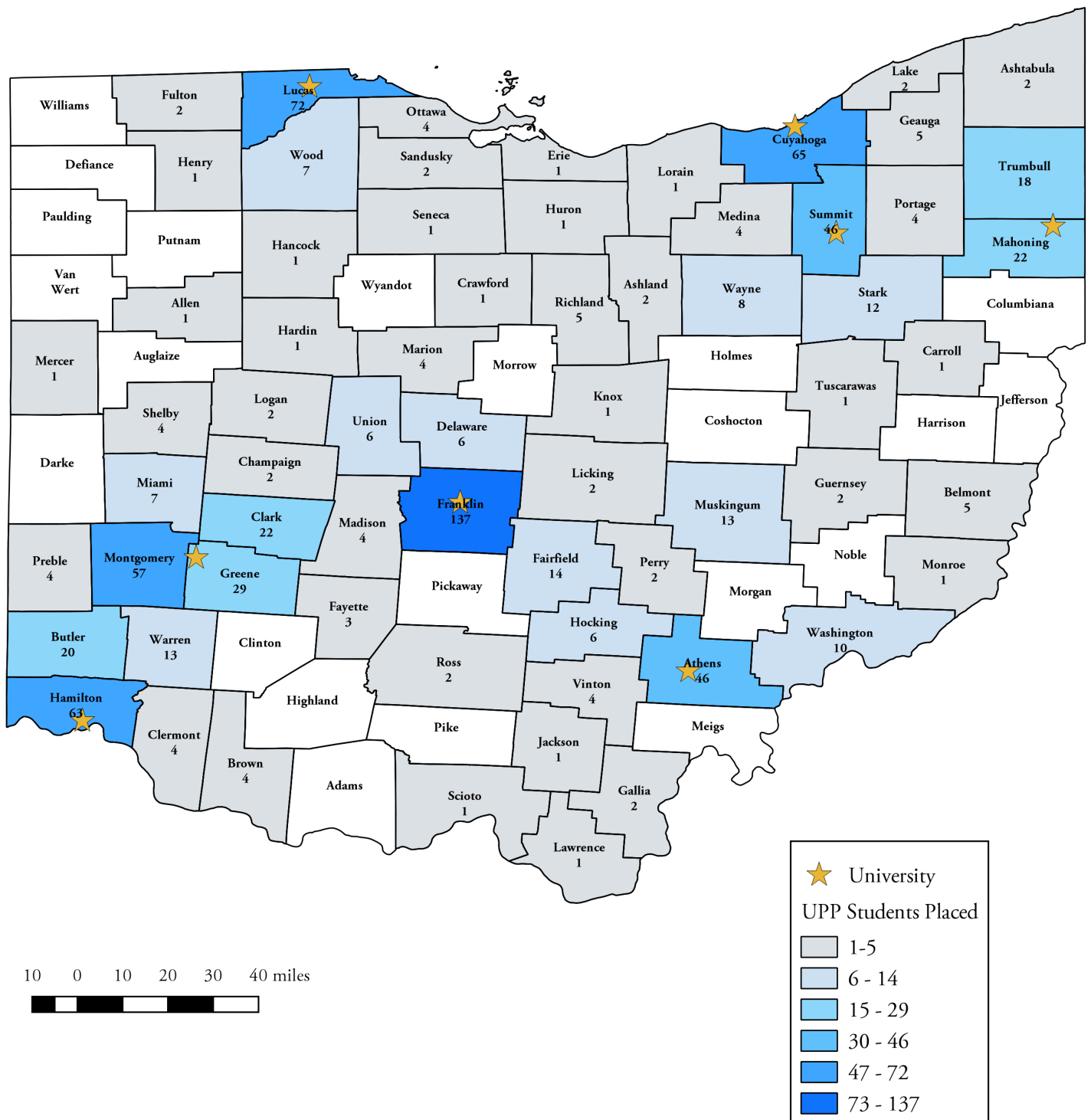
### Status of those who did not complete the program since 2002

Deferral to pursue additional education	28
Program termination	237
Seeking employment	1
Commitment completion in progress	63



# University Partnership Program

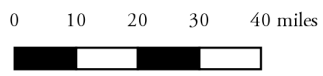
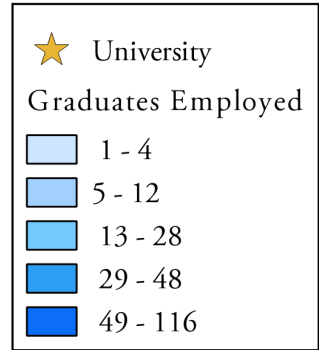
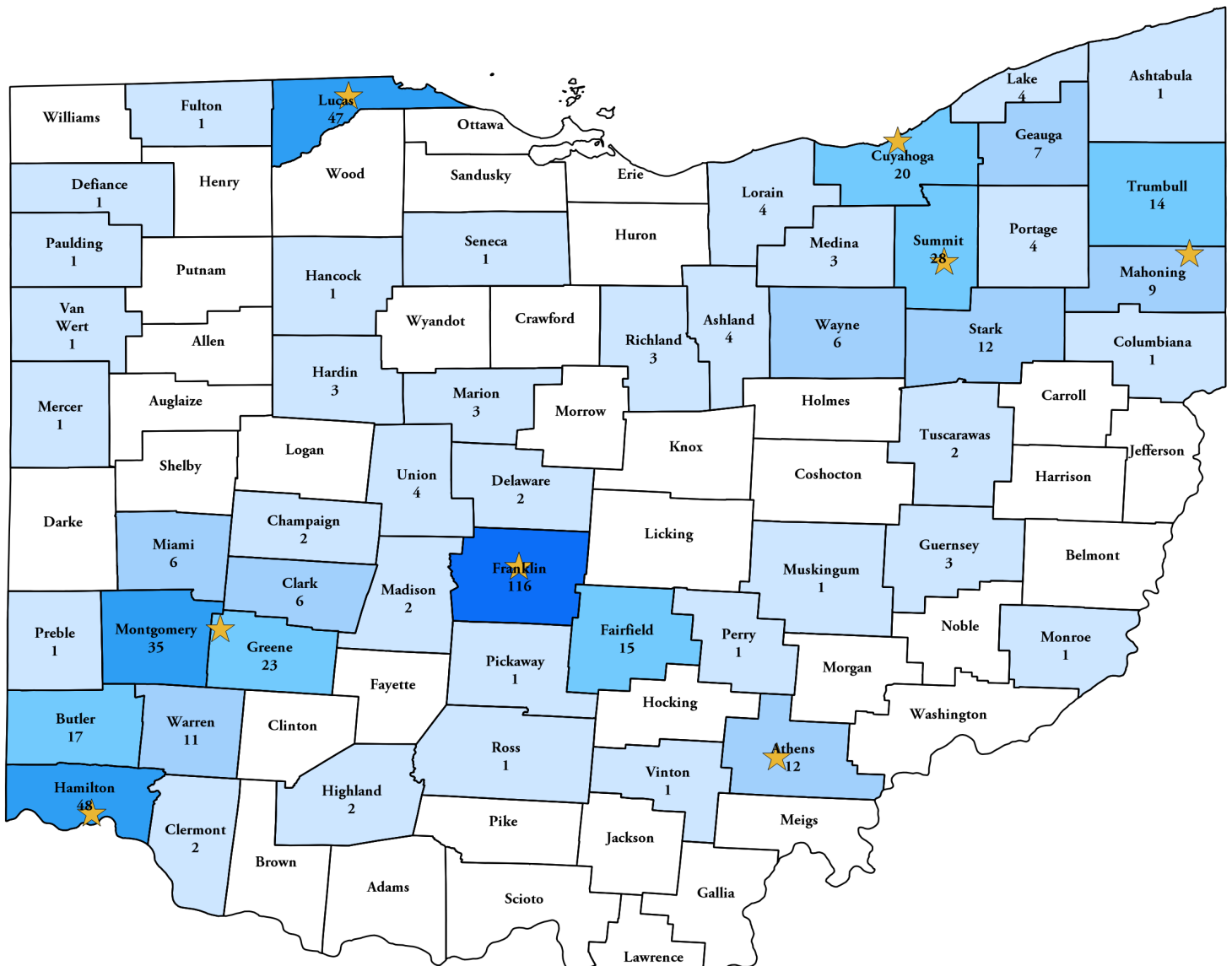
## UPP Student Internships at Ohio PCSA's since 2002





# University Partnership Program

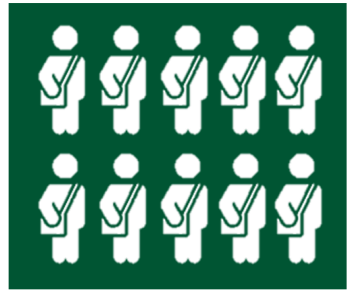
## UPP Graduates Hired by Ohio PCSA's since 2002





# Cleveland State University

**Students enrolled in 2016-2017 cohort:**



## Students Since 2009

82  
Total Students

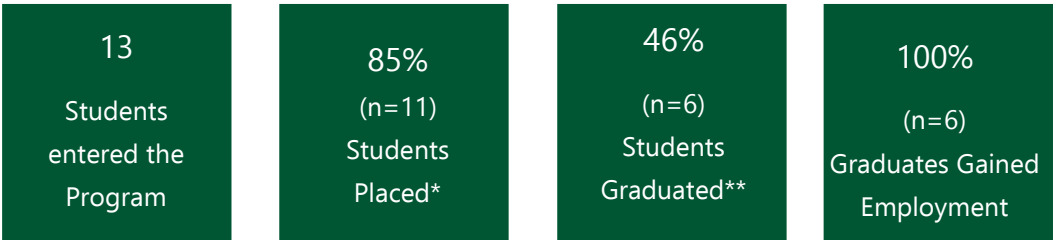
85%  
(n=70)  
Students

85%  
(n=70)  
Students Graduated

44%  
(n=31)  
Graduates Hired

26%  
(n=8)  
Graduates Completed Program Commitment

## 2015-2016 Cohort



\*Only Seniors and MSW students are eligible for placement. Students in the junior program are not placed until their senior year.  
\*\*Only seniors and MSW students were included in this calculation, as they are the only students who would be able to graduate.

### Students placed in 3 counties:

Cuyahoga (n=9)  
Geauga (n=1)  
Medina (n=1)



### Graduates hired in 3 counties:

Cuyahoga (n=4)  
Geauga (n=1)  
Summit (n=1)



## Status of those who did not complete the program since 2009

Deferral to pursue additional education	9
Program termination	32
Seeking employment	1
Commitment completion in progress	8

No data available on reasons students terminated from the program



# Ohio University

**Students enrolled in 2016-2017 cohort:**



## Students Since 2003

116  
Total Students

99%  
(n=115)  
Students

84%  
(n=97)  
Students Graduated

67%  
(n=65)  
Graduates Hired

54%  
(n=52)  
Graduates Completed Program Commitment

## 2015-2016 Cohort

10  
Students entered the Program

90%  
(n=9)  
Students Placed\*

100%  
(n=9)  
Students Graduated\*\*

78%  
(n=7)  
Graduates Gained Employment

\*Only Seniors and MSW students are eligible for placement. Students in the junior program are not placed until their senior year.  
\*\*Only seniors and MSW students were included in this calculation, as they are the only students who would be able to graduate.

### 1 Student in 2-year program ◆ 9 Students in 1-year program

#### Students placed in 6 counties:

- Athens (n=2)
- Belmont (n=2)
- Fairfield (n=1)
- Gallia (n=1)
- Guernsey (n=2)
- Tuscarawas (n=1)

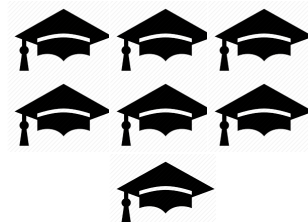


#### Degree Type:

- 8 BSW
- 1 MSW

#### Graduates hired in 5 counties:

- Athens (n=2)
- Cuyahoga (n=1)
- Fairfield (n=2)
- Franklin (n=1)
- Guernsey (n=1)



### Status of those who did not complete the program since 2003

Deferral to pursue additional education	2
Program termination	45
Seeking employment	0
Commitment completion in progress	7

#### Reasons for Program Termination

- 11 Students decided not to pursue a career in child welfare
- 2 Students terminated due to family circumstances
- 2 Students relocated out of state
- 1 Student could not find employment
- 4 Students returned to graduate school
- 25 Unknown





# The Ohio State University

**Students enrolled in 2016-2017 cohort:**



## 2015-2016 Cohort

### Students Since 2002

184  
Total Students

96%  
(n=176)  
Students

87%  
(n=160)  
Students Graduated

73%  
(n=117)  
Graduates Hired

56%  
(n=90)  
Graduates Completed Program Commitment

14 Students entered the Program	100% (n=14) Students Placed*	100% (n=14) Students Graduated**	50% (n=7) Graduates Gained Employment
------------------------------------	------------------------------------	--	---

\*Only Seniors and MSW students are eligible for placement. Students in the junior program are not placed until their senior year.  
\*\*Only seniors and MSW students were included in this calculation, as they are the only students who would be able to graduate.

**12 Students in 1-year BSW program** ◆ **2 Students in 1-year MSW program**

**Students placed in 4 counties:**

- Fairfield (n=1)
- Franklin (n=11)
- Perry (n=1)
- Shelby (n=1)

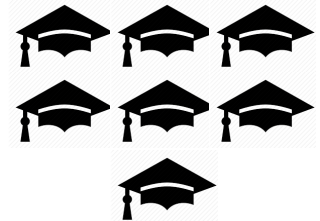


**Degree Type:**

- 12 BSSW
- 2 MSW

**Graduates hired in 2 counties:**

- Fairfield (n=1)
- Franklin (n=6)



### Status of those who did not complete the program since 2002

Deferral to pursue additional education	4
Program termination	49
Seeking employment	0
Commitment completion in progress	7

#### Reasons for Program Termination

- 8 Students decided not to pursue a career in child welfare
- 4 Students terminated by agency
- 1 Student relocated out of state
- 3 Students returned to graduate school
- 33 Unknown



# University of Akron

**Students enrolled in 2016-2017 cohort:**



## 2015-2016 Cohort

### Students Since 2007

69  
Total Students

86%  
(n=59)  
Students

77%  
(n=53)  
Students Graduated

79%  
(n=42)  
Graduates Hired

55%  
(n=29)  
Graduates Completed Program Commitment

11  
Students entered the Program

100%  
(n=11)  
Students Placed\*

100%  
(n=11)  
Students Graduated\*\*

64%  
(n=7)  
Graduates Gained Employment

\*Only Seniors and MSW students are eligible for placement. Students in the junior program are not placed until their senior year.  
\*\*Only seniors and MSW students were included in this calculation, as they are the only students who would be able to graduate.

**9 Students in 1-year BSW program** ◆ **2 Students in 1-year MSW program**

**Students placed in 3 counties:**

- Stark (n=3)
- Summit (n=5)
- Wayne (n=3)

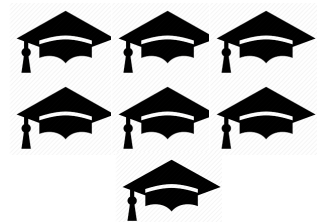


**Degree Type:**

- 9 BSW
- 2 MSW

**Graduates hired in 5 counties:**

- Ashland (n=1)
- Richland (n=1)
- Stark (n=2)
- Summit (n=2)
- Wayne (n=1)



### Status of those who did not complete the program since 2007

Program termination	23
Seeking employment	0
Commitment completion in progress	8

#### Reasons for Program Termination

- 3 Students decided not to pursue a career in child welfare
- 1 Student relocated out of state
- 1 Student was unable to find employment
- 18 Unknown



# University of Cincinnati

**Students enrolled in 2016-2017 cohort:**



## 2015-2016 Cohort

### Students Since 2004

115  
Total Students

73%  
(n=84)  
Students

77%  
(n=64)  
Students Graduated

63%  
(n=40)  
Graduates Hired

63%  
(n=40)  
Graduates Completed Program Commitment

8  
Students entered the Program

100%  
(n=8)  
Students Placed\*

91%  
(n=8)  
Students Graduated\*\*

70%  
(n=7)  
Graduates Gained Employment

\*Only Seniors and MSW students are eligible for placement. Students in the junior program are not placed until their senior year.  
\*\*Only seniors and MSW students were included in this calculation, as they are the only students who would be able to graduate.

**6 Students in 1-year BSW program** ◆ **2 Students in 1-year MSW program**

### Students placed in 3 counties:

- Hamilton (n=5)
- Preble (n=1)
- Warren (n=2)



### Degree Type:

- 8 BSW
- 2 MSW

### Graduates hired in 2 counties:

- Hamilton (n=5)
- Warren (n=2)



### Status of those who did not complete the program since 2004

Deferral to pursue additional education	4
Program termination	27
Seeking employment	0
Commitment completion in progress	9

### Reasons for Program Termination

- 4 Students decided not to pursue a career in child welfare
- 1 Student was terminated by agency
- 7 Students were unable to find employment
- 15 Unknown



# University of Toledo

**Students enrolled in 2016-2017 cohort:**



## 2015-2016 Cohort

### Students Since 2003

95  
Total Students

89%  
(n=85)  
Students

81%  
(n=77)  
Students Graduated

71%  
(n=55)  
Graduates Hired

49%  
(n=38)  
Graduates Completed Program Commitment

12  
Students entered the Program

33%  
(n=4)  
Students Placed\*

33%  
(n=4)  
Students Graduated\*\*

100%  
(n=4)  
Graduates Gained Employment

\*Only Seniors and MSW students are eligible for placement. Students in the junior program are not placed until their senior year.

\*\*Only seniors and MSW students were included in this calculation, as they are the only students who would be able to graduate.

### 12 Students in 2-year BSW program

#### Students placed in 2 counties:

- Fulton (n=1)
- Lucas (n=3)



#### Degree Type:

- 4 BSW

#### Graduates hired in 2 counties:

- Fulton (n=1)
- Lucas (n=3)



### Status of those who did not complete the program since 2003

Deferral to pursue additional education	1
Program termination	40
Seeking employment	0
Commitment completion in progress	4

#### Reasons for Program Termination

- 2 students decided not to pursue a career in child welfare
- 1 Student relocated out of state
- 4 Students were unable to find employment
- 1 Student was terminated by agency
- 1 Student terminated due to family circumstances
- 4 Students pursued further education
- 27 Unknown



# Wright State University

**Students enrolled in 2016-2017 cohort:**



## 2015-2016 Cohort

### Students Since 2003

115  
Total  
Students

97%  
(n=112)  
Students

81%  
(n=93)  
Students  
Graduated

86%  
(n=80)  
Graduates  
Hired

61%  
(n=57)  
Graduates Com-  
pleted Program  
Commitment

11  
Students  
entered the  
Program

64%  
(n=7)  
Students  
Placed\*

22%  
(n=2)  
Students  
Graduated\*\*

100%  
(n=2)  
Graduates Gained  
Employment

\*Only Seniors and MSW students are eligible for placement. Students in the junior program are not placed until their senior year.  
\*\*Only seniors and MSW students were included in this calculation, as they are the only students who would be able to graduate.

**7 Students in 1-year BSW program** ◆ **4 Students in 2-year BSW program**

### Students placed in 3 counties:

- Clark (n=1)
- Green (n=2)
- Montgomery (n=4)



### Degree Type:

- 2 BSW

### Graduates hired in 1 County:

- Greene (n=2)



## Status of those who did not complete the program since 2003

Deferral to pursue additional education	6
Program termination	16
Seeking employment	0
Commitment completion in progress	12

### Reasons for Program Termination\*\*\*

- 3 Students decided not to pursue a career in child welfare
- 3 Students were terminated by agency
- 1 Student pursued further education

\*\*\*Totals may not equal program termination due to incomplete/missing data.



# Youngstown State University

**Students enrolled in 2016-2017 cohort:**



## 2015-2016 Cohort

### Students Since 2009

59  
Total Students

83%  
(n=49)  
Students

78%  
(n=46)  
Students Graduated

78%  
(n=36)  
Graduates Hired

52%  
(n=24)  
Graduates Completed Program Commitment

1  
Student entered the Program

100%  
(n=1)  
Student Placed

100%  
(n=1)  
Student Graduated

100%  
(n=1)  
Graduate Gained Employment

### Student placed in 1 county:

- Mahoning



### Degree Type:

- BSW

### Graduate hired in 1 County:

- Mahoning



### Status of those who did not complete the program since 2009

Deferral to pursue additional education	1
Program Termination	14
Seeking Employment	0
Commitment Completion in Progress	4

### Reasons for Program Termination\*

- 4 Students decided not to pursue a career in child welfare
- 2 Students were unable to find employment
- 1 Student moved out of state

\*Totals may not equal program termination due to incomplete/missing data.

## Child Welfare 1 Course Analysis

In 2014 the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program began revising Caseworker Core to include CAPMIS, Differential Response, and additional information on engagement. In August of 2016, the University Partnership coordinators and instructors attended a four-day training on the new revisions. A sample syllabus was disseminated, and action plans for implementation of the new material were developed by Campus Coordinators. Due to the brief time between the training and the start of autumn semester, the instructors agreed to implement the course materials at different levels. The syllabi for each University's program were reviewed to assess the progress of implementation of the revisions. Each university has made some progress toward implementing the revisions. It is expected that further implementation will occur in autumn semester of 2017. The table below displays the findings of that review. Most notably:

- Five universities have not yet implemented full content on safety planning.
- Three universities used the CAPMIS reading materials as required reading. Two universities didn't include them as part of the course.

University	Assignment Consistency	Lecture Consistency	Reading Consistency
<b>YSU</b>	Used none of the recommended assignments for the revised core implementation	57%	75% used many supplemental readings.
<b>UT</b>	Used none of the recommended assignments for the revised core implementation	36%	Only required excerpts from Field Guide.
<b>WSU</b>	Used none of the recommended assignments for revised core implementation	43%	Only used Field Guide sections. No additional reading requirements identified in the syllabus.
<b>OSU</b>	Used recommended family assessment quizzes	57%	Used mostly Field Guide readings. None of the additional recommended readings used.
<b>OU</b>	Used all recommended assignments and quizzes	100%	100% consistent.
<b>CSU</b>	Used one recommended assignment	43%	Only used Field Guide readings and Human Trafficking online course.
<b>UC</b>	Used none of the recommended assignments/quizzes	57%	100% consistent (used bibliography, unsure if readings are required).
<b>UA</b>	Used one of the recommended assignments	79%	Used many of the recommended readings, but not all.

# UPP Student Focus Groups: Recruitment/Selection

Focus groups are conducted annually with UPP students at all eight UPP universities. These focus groups are intended to gain actionable feedback about students' experiences in the program. In the spring of 2016, 60 UPP students participated in eight focus groups. Only 11 UPP students did not participate in the focus groups (One MSW student and 10 juniors). The information presented below represents key themes.

## Recruitment/Referral

Students	How they learned about UPP
13.3% (n=8)	Professor
56.6% (n=34)	Campus Coordinator, Director of University Social Work Program, or Presentation
30% (n=18)	Other UPP students

All 60 (100%) of UPP students participated in a screening process and a standardized application processes.

### Findings

- Consistent with prior years the great majority of UPP students find out about the program through the University Campus Coordinator's recruitment activities. A recent survey of recruitment activities identified 30 different marketing strategies targeting prospective UPP students. One student said; *"Our campus coordinator puts a lot of time into recruiting for UPP."*
- Increasingly, prior UPP graduates are recruiting new students to the program. *"I had three friends who were UPP students, and they talked to me about UPP. I was glad they did."*

### Analysis

- Based on the information received, the UPP Coordinators use a wide array of recruitment activities to recruit UPP students. Recruitment is critical to ensuring each university recruits the maximum allowable number of students.
- Some universities utilize several institutionalized recruitment techniques into their social work programs. These universities consistently recruit the maximum number of students.

## Application/Screening/Interview Process

### Findings

- All focus group participants recalled completing a written application which included basic information about the student, case scenario, an essay and references.
- All students recalled an interview/screening process.
- One student said. *"I thought the process was thorough and efficient, didn't waste any time."*
- 73% of the students felt the interview process was formal. *"We knew it was competitive, so we wanted to do our best and took it seriously.";* *"I thought the interview process was formal and done as if to help prepare us for a job interview."*
- Focus group respondents reported variation from university to university as to how the interview process is conducted, the timeframes, and how quickly students are informed of their acceptance and the location of their field placement.

### Analysis

- The focus group responses indicate that a standard application process is used but that there are significant variations in other aspects of the acceptance process.
- The components of the most successful application/screening/interview process as defined by the students include:
  - ◇ Use of standardized application
  - ◇ Screening and interviewing for both the program and the counties are completed one semester prior to the placement.



# UPP Student Focus Groups: Recruitment/Selection

## Reason for enrolling in UPP

Students	Reason for Enrolling*
31.2% (n=29)	Incentive funds
36.6% (n=34)	Opportunity for employment in the public sector
26.99% (n=25)	Existing interest in child welfare
5.4% (n=5)	Recruited/attracted to child welfare

\*Participants may cite more than one reason

### Findings

- The largest number of UPP students was drawn to the program this year because of the opportunity for employment in the public sector. *"I was attracted to UPP because of the education you would get, experience with different populations such as mental health, drug and alcohol, child abuse and neglect and the aspect of getting a job right out of school."*
- The second most frequently identified factor that attracted students to the UPP was the incentive funds and their interest in child welfare. *"I was already interested in working with child welfare, and when I heard this program provided training and an incentive, it was a perfect fit."*
- Other reasons included:
  - ◇ *"I wanted a fast-paced internship where I could work with families and kids."*
  - ◇ *"I had been told the UPP experience provided the opportunity for more hands-on and that the experience would be great. They were right."*
  - ◇ *"It seems like a good way to find out whether or not I wanted to do this work."*

### Analysis

- There was a wide range of reasons cited for applying to UPP. Recruitment strategies and direct written and verbal communication with prospective UPP students should focus on these reasons.

## General Opinion of the Child Welfare Courses

### Findings

#### Class

- Students at seven of the eight universities viewed the Child Welfare I and Child Welfare II classes very positively. One university encountered some technical difficulties in delivering the content of the classes. This will be addressed in the upcoming school year.  
*"This class is way better than any other Social Work class; we learned more and had a lot of discussion."*  
*"I thought the classes were challenging, makes you think and is relevant to what we will do in the field."*
- When asked at one university about their general opinion of the classes, students said; *"Loved it!", "Only reason I came to campus on Wednesday."* *"Challenging, but we loved it."*

#### Instructors

- Overall the students felt the course instructors were noteworthy:  
*"Instructor is amazing." "Awesome!" "You want to go to class because she is so good."*  
*"My instructor did everything hands-on; the class explained everything so it was easy to do it in the field."*  
*"My instructor's knowledge base is tremendous; she adds depth to the class, and the fact she works in the field makes it even better."*  
*"Having two different instructors, both with experience in the field, made this class perfect."*

#### Text

- The eight universities used the "Field Guide to Child Welfare" text to varying degrees. Some universities used the text in its entirety, others used it for assigned reading, and some primarily used Power Points from the text and outside reading.
- Positive comments regarding the text included:  
*"Text was a good resource, helped me understand the role of the case worker and taught me about what I would be doing on the job."*  
*"Text was very detailed, easy to read and understand."*  
*"I used the text as a reference for my other classes."*
- One person said, *"I thought the text was outdated, but I heard they were updating it."*
- Several students reported seeing the text in the Public Children Services Agencies

# UPP Student Focus Groups: Recruitment/Selection

## **Analysis**

Overall, the comments regarding the classes, text and instructors were positive

- Students frequently reported the instructor's life experience in the field made the class so much more relevant and applicable, *"The classes were so interesting and I enjoyed the instructors who also worked in the field, that's a good thing."*
- A summary of the focus group feedback in this area indicate the success of these classes are impacted by:
  1. Instructor's life experience in the field of child welfare
  2. Instructors ability to make the content clear and transferable to the student and then to the field
  3. Personal interest of the instructor in the students and their success
  4. Students' opportunity to use the knowledge and skill gained in class in the field
  5. Classes taken in order (CW I followed by CW 2) with concurrent field placements
  6. Instructor's passion and compassion for this type of work
    - "My instructor was really flexible and really thorough; she cares about what she teaches, and she cares about us."*
    - "Experience I had in the field goes along with the text."*
    - "These classes gave us the chance to talk about what we were doing in the field. They were more experience-based than any of my other classes."*

## **Specific Classroom Lessons that Directly Relate to Field Placement Work**

### **Findings**

- Focus group participants identified 26 different classroom topics that directly relate to field work. The most frequently mentioned were:
  - ◇ Techniques for identifying child abuse and neglect
  - ◇ Assessment skills (e.g. safety, family) including use of CAPMIS tools and case planning
  - ◇ Stages of normal child development and the impact of abuse & neglect
  - ◇ Family engagement strategies
- Other topics of interest included: cultural diversity; child welfare laws, including ICWA; disproportionality; and self care.

### **Analysis**

- This year's classroom lessons are very similar (almost identical) to the last several years, indicating the instructors are consistent in their delivery of the course content.

## **Ways to Improve Integration of Courses with Field Placement Experience**

### **Findings**

- The most frequent suggestion for improving integration of course and field were related to SACWIS and how casework processes of safety and risk assessment and case planning are documented in SACWIS.
- Students also strongly recommended that the classes (CW I & CWII) be taken in order and concurrently with field placement.
- Finally more information on drug and alcohol use/abuse and addiction should be provided; *"So many of our clients are impacted by drugs and/or alcohol, and we really did not get enough information to prepare us to deal with this."*

### **Analysis**

- The students most frequently requested improvements to practicing safety planning, assessment, and case planning in SACWIS. This will be addressed in the upcoming school years as all UPP students will now have the opportunity to attend SACWIS learning labs as part of their UPP education. The opportunity for the students to learn how to do these necessary activities and then be able to put them into SACWIS will be invaluable to counties as they hire UPP students as caseworkers and supervisors.
- Most of the universities try to have the UPP students take the classes in order and concurrently with field placement. Not doing so should be the exception, and perhaps some standardization would be beneficial in this area .
- The universities noted that the need for increased class work is a challenge because students already have a very full state of required classes.

# UPP Student Focus Groups: Coursework

## Intern selection process and assignment to Field Instructor/Supervisor

### Findings

- Six out of the eight universities had students identify their top three choices for placements; 95% of those students received their first choice, and 5% received their third choice.
- Students at seven of the eight universities reported the interview process for an intern position to be formal or very formal:
  - ◊ “I was interviewed by five workers who asked questions about me, reviewed my resume and checked my references.”
  - ◊ “We were told to come to the interview prepared to do a job interview.”
  - ◊ “I had a very in-depth interview. I interviewed for three hours; they went over my resume piece by piece.”
- 37.5% of students were placed in assessment units, 37.5% were placed in protective/ongoing units, and 25% were placed in specialized units such as foster, adoption, kinship, Alternative Response, Sexual Abuse or quality assurance.
- Students at one university were placed in a different unit every three days of the first semester, and then chose one of those units for their second semester placement. One student reported being assigned to a task supervisor who was a caseworker with an LSW; the rest were supervised by the unit or a supervisor in the training unit.

### Analysis

- Judging from the number of formal and in-depth interviews conducted by the county agencies it is evident they are taking this process very seriously and already have a significant investment in hosting UPP students.
- It is impressive that 95% of the students were placed with their first choice. This speaks highly of the relationship the UPP coordinators have established with the county agencies.
- Even though the students reported the field interview process as somewhat stressful, most of the students felt, *“The interviews were good practice for a job interview.”*

## Completion of the Learning Contract

### Findings

- All university Schools of Social Work require a standardized *“learning contract”* to be completed by all student interns, regardless of their field placement arrangements.
- All students reported completing the learning contract. The majority completed it with help from their field supervisor and/or campus coordinator. Only in a few cases did students complete it on their own or with another student. One student reported completing hers with her class instructor.
- 90% of the students reported using the “UPP Field Practicum Manual” or the “Key Field Experience Activities for Interns: A Guideline” to help complete the learning contract.
- Students’ opinions on the Learning contracts varied:
  - ◊ *“I understand why we have to do the contract, but it was excessive and redundant.”*
  - ◊ *“Parts of it were not related to things we could do in our internship.”*
  - ◊ *“I liked the learning contract, although some of it was redundant.”*
- Several students reported using the learning contract during routine supervision with their field supervisor.

### Analysis

- While students understood the need for the learning contract, it appears some adaptation might be beneficial to make it more useful.
- Most of the universities offer some training to field supervisors on the learning contract, either via group instruction or individually. A more individualized approach to this training could also address some of the concerns with the learning contract as the newer field supervisors tend to have the most challenges.
- Use of the learning contract during supervision indicates a transfer of learning opportunity from classroom to field.

# UPP Student Focus Groups: Field Experience

## Role of Field Instructor/Supervisor in Organizing and Linking Course to Field Work

### Findings

- The great majority of the UPP students report a good working relationship with their field supervisor:
  - ◊ *"I had a very good relationship with my supervisor; she is a strong advocate for bringing students into the workforce."*
- Students report a varying degree of organization among their field supervisors. Many reported very organized field placements:
  - ◊ *"My supervisor was extremely organized. I had my own desk, agency handbook, and everything I needed to get started. She was always ready for the students."*
  - ◊ *"My supervisor was extremely organized; she had a binder (just like she used for the caseworkers) and kept everything in it; supervision notes, my cases, hours, etc. I always felt welcomed by everyone and was treated professionally."*
- When asked how field supervisors organized their internship the students replied; *"Excellent."* *"Nice job."* *"Superbly."*
- Other students reported their field supervisors were not well organized or prepared:
  - ◊ *"My supervisor was lacking. I had to seek her out for supervision and things to do."*
  - ◊ *"Often my supervisor forgot I was coming or had nothing prepared for me and I was sitting and doing nothing."*
  - ◊ *"I felt like my supervisor didn't know what I could and couldn't do, so I just sat until I could find things to do."*
- The majority of students reported routine supervision with their field supervisors:
  - ◊ *"My field supervisor was really helpful and gave me a lot of feedback during our weekly supervision session. It was great."*
  - ◊ *"I kept a journal of what I did during the week and brought it to supervision, and we reviewed it each week."*
  - ◊ *"I took an agenda of what I wanted to talk about to supervision each week."*
- Others reported: *"Supervision was catch as catch can."*
- Several students mentioned being able to work with UPP graduates during their placement as a very positive experience.
  - ◊ *"One of the caseworkers I shadowed was a UPP graduate, so they went out of their way to help me."*
  - ◊ *"I had a UPP graduate in my unit, so they were ready for me."*
  - ◊ The majority of students reported agency staff were very welcoming and expressed they were glad the students were there. *"I always felt welcomed by everyone and was treated professionally."*
- A small number of other students had a much different experience:
  - ◊ *"My supervisors were helpful, but the caseworkers did not act like they wanted us to shadow them."*
  - ◊ *"Caseworkers should want to and be willing to work with the interns. Those who did were wonderful; when they did not, it reduced the value of the experience."*
- When asked how well the field supervisor did in linking the field experience with the course, most answers were very positive:
  - ◊ *"When we were doing the learning plan we sat down and linked it to the classwork."*
  - ◊ *"My supervisor went out of her way to link my course work to the field; she would ask me what I was learning in class and how I would like to see that in the field."*
  - ◊ *"My supervisor took my assignments from class and worked them into my time in the agency. If she could not do so, she found someone who could."*
  - ◊ *"Field supervisor did a great job of linking field to classwork; he always asked what I still needed and what I learned in class."*

### Analysis

- There appears to be several components of a successful field placement experience:
  1. Well organized and prepared field supervisors
  2. Highly educated agencies on the role, value and opportunity available for an intern
  3. Commitment to doing the work necessary to shape and mold the next generation of caseworkers
  4. Routine structured supervision
  5. Strong linkage of coursework to field experience
  6. Utilization of prior UPP graduates as mentor/support
  7. Agency staff (supervisors, managers and caseworkers) who are invested in and support the concept of interns as a positive way to build the workforce
  8. Supervisor's and intern's ability and opportunity to build a strong working relationship
  9. Passion for the work we do
- Research and experience indicate many of these components are necessary to also build a strong competent workforce.
- It is also apparent the students have a role to play in ensuring their placement is successful, as indicated by their comments about being prepared for supervision.

# UPP Student Focus Groups: Field Experience

## Students' Suggestions for Field Instructors/Supervisors

### Findings

- Current themes this year focused around:
  - ◇ Better organized internships. *"Help us find meaningful things to do from the beginning"* was a re-occurring theme.
  - ◇ Use of SACWIS:
    - ⇒ *"Have learning objectives and SACWIS access ready for interns the first day."*
    - ⇒ *"SACWIS access was too limited. We need to learn SACWIS and casework at the same time."*
  - ◇ Understanding what the UPP student can and cannot do:
    - ⇒ *"Let workers know that interns can do more than just paperwork or case notes."*
    - ⇒ *"My mentor thought I had more training than I did and at times told or asked me to do something because she thought I knew how to do it but I did not."*
- Less re-occurring themes were related to:
  - ◇ Ensuring the supervisor and caseworker wanted to work with interns.
  - ◇ Linking UPP graduates in the agency with UPP interns. *"Make it a more formal arrangement so graduates who want to work with the interns could sign up and UPP students could go to them for input or suggestions."*
  - ◇ Placement of interns within the agency. *"My office was in a quiet hallway, and I was forgotten. Let other staff know interns are there and place them where they get more exposure."*

### Analysis

- Focus group students' recommendations are concrete and worthy of our attention.
- The majority of issues related to SACWIS should be addressed once UPP students participate in SACWIS Labs starting in the Fall of 2016.

## Students' Suggestions to make Field Experience more Meaningful

### Findings

- Many of the comments related to improving field experience were positive:
  - ◇ *"I have no suggestions, I fell in love with the profession and caseworkers while at placement because of the opportunity the agency gave me."*
  - ◇ *"I have no suggestions to improve my placement. It went really well."*
  - ◇ *"Everything I encountered made it a positive experience."*
- The only recommended changes were related to how the placement was structured:
  - ◇ *"Should have stayed in one unit instead of moving us around the first semester."*
- Some structural issues in setting up the placement were identified (clarity on who is to do this, when, and how students are notified).

### Analysis

- It is difficult suggest improvements with such positive response; all we can say is thank you to the counties for making the field experience so positive, and keep up the great work!
- One university's students were placed in an agency that moved them from unit to unit during their first semester. The agency listened to their feedback and changed that practice.
- Students stated that field placement confirmed some students' interest in the field, provided all of them an understanding of the nature of the work, and better prepared them for working in the field than class alone would have done.

# UPP Student Focus Groups: Field Experience

## General Thoughts on Field Experience (Impression, Reactions)

### Findings

- When asked to describe the internship experience in a word or phrase, students used approximately 29 different adjectives or phrases in response, with “eye-opening” being the most frequently used adjective. “Positive experience,” “Meaningful,” and “Amazing” followed closely behind.
- Additional phrases included:
  - ◇ “I am a better person because I did this.”
  - ◇ “Foundation-building.”
  - ◇ “Helped me grow emotionally.”
  - ◇ “Validated the fact I want to do casework.”
  - ◇ “One of the best opportunities I have had in college.”
  - ◇ “Helped me figure out what I don’t want to do.”
- When asked about the most valuable or dynamic learning experience in placement, the responses include involvement in over 26 distinct child welfare activities.
  - ◇ The most frequently mentioned activity involved removing children, including babies, from the hospital, sibling groups, human trafficking:
    - ⇒ “Police present for one removal and they knocked down the door to get to the child.”
    - ⇒ “Removal at the office when police had to be called. Dad threw a chair at us, and the police had to block the street so the workers and I could leave.”
  - ◇ The second most cited learning experience was related to seeing sexual abuse investigations, most of which were done at local children’s advocacy centers.
  - ◇ Several students also indicated their greatest learning experience was related to dirty houses:
    - ⇒ “Seeing dirty homes; seeing the worst of the worst. It’s not like you think it will be.”
    - ⇒ “Bed bugs and dirty homes. I am now a leading expert on bed bugs.”
  - ◇ The third most cited was drug use and addiction:
    - ⇒ “Seeing so much drug use and domestic violence.”
    - ⇒ “I was in a house with a meth lab last week.”
    - ⇒ “Drug use was evident everywhere and there is so little we could do.”
- Of interest was the students’ statements regarding how much time the workers had to spend doing casework:
  - ◇ “We went on a routine home visit and had to take a nine-year-old child to a psych unit. It took most of the day and way into the night. This helped me understand what caseworkers go through; a routine visit can turn into something different and take the whole day.”
  - ◇ “My last day of placement I helped with a removal of eight children. Seeing how much had to be done and how long it took, and then seeing everyone come together and be supportive to get this done was impressive.”
  - ◇ “I learned to never underestimate the value of networking and knowing who works in which agency and unit.”
  - ◇ “Everything was valuable. The fact that I was able to take theory and apply it and find out that everything I studied and wrote papers on was applicable in the field.”

### Analysis

- Words and phrases such as “life-altering”, “meaningful”, “valuable”, “eventful”, “difficult”, indicate the field experience had a significant impact on the students. Students felt the field placements prepared them for the demanding work of protecting children.
- It is apparent from the experiences identified by the students that many had the opportunity to experience child welfare first hand. Such experience helps them decide whether or not child welfare fits for them and better prepares them to do child protection work after graduation.
- PCSAs should be commended for allowing interns to truly experience child protection. This enriches the program and allows interns to see how child welfare should be done prior to them having to do it themselves.

# UPP Student Focus Groups: Campus Coordination

## How do campus coordinators assist students

### Findings

- The great majority of students hold their campus coordinator in very high esteem:
  - ◊ *"She was very supportive, talked us off the ledge before we knew we were on the ledge."*
  - ◊ *"He was very involved in our placement and frequently stopped by our placement site to see how we were doing."*
  - ◊ *"Our campus coordinator has our backs; she is always there for us and gets back to us when we need her."*
- Students reported their campus coordinator help them integrate coursework with field placement by:
  - ◊ Meeting with the students in the field and addressing concerns
  - ◊ Using seminar to integrate assignment into field placement
  - ◊ Meeting with the students and field supervisors in the field
  - ◊ Being in the field once a semester, some were there much more often.

### Analysis

- While a strong, positive relationship with a field supervisor makes for a more optimal learning experience, apparently the support, compassion, and passion the coordinators have for their UPP students and the field of child welfare is equally important.

## Benefits of Group Seminar with Campus Coordinator

### Findings

- Four of the universities (OSU, WSU, YSU, UT) offer UPP-specific seminars conducted by the campus coordinator.
- At the other four universities (CSU, UA, UC, OU), students attend an integrated seminar with other social work majors.
- UT offers the opportunity for students to attend both a UPP-specific seminar and an integrated seminar.
- Seminars vary from being very structured (agenda, planned activities and content) to being more open-ended.
- Length of time and frequency of the seminars also vary from university to university.
- Seminars facilitated by the campus coordinators are reported to be a very valuable experience:
  - ◊ *"The campus coordinator does a great job with seminar; we have a structured format, as well as enough time to talk about what we need to talk about."*
  - ◊ *"Seminar is very valuable. It is phenomenal when everyone understands what you are talking about and gives you the support you need."*
  - ◊ *"I like the fact it is only UPP students in it. We learned a lot from each other and could relate to what everyone said and did."*
- Integrated seminars received mixed reviews:
  - ◊ *"It is helpful to hear what other agencies do and how they work with the same families we do."*
  - ◊ *"We learned about a lot of other agencies, and it gave us the opportunities to explain child welfare and help them understand what it really is."*
  - ◊ *"Integrated seminar was too big; not everyone got to talk and a lot of time was wasted just setting up. It was a waste of time."*
  - ◊ *"Integrated seminar was not valuable; I got more out of traveling with other students than I did out of seminar."*
  - ◊ *"Seminar was not helpful; it was a waste of time."*
- Virtually none of the students who attended UPP-specific seminars had any suggestions for improvements; students from one university suggested changing the time.
- Students from three universities that only conducted integrated seminars said they would prefer a UPP-specific seminar taught by one person.
- Students from one university said they thought a UPP-specific seminar would be helpful but thought they could get a similar experience from class because the child welfare classes consisted of mostly UPP students.

### Analysis

- Students who participated in the UPP-specific seminar reported perceived higher rates of transfer-of-learning as compared to students of the integrated seminar. They thought the seminars gave them the opportunity to practice and discuss what was covered in class and in the field.
- The one common dominator of the UPP-specific seminars was the quality of instruction provided by the campus coordinators. The fact that they were very knowledgeable about the students' field placements (because they assisted with constructing the learning contracts and checked students' progress) likely contributed to the quality of seminar instruction. After hearing the feedback from focus group, one university has decided to add a UPP-specific seminar to their program.
- Regardless of whether universities offer UPP-specific or integrated seminars, students requested that the seminar fulfill the seminar requirement of the Social Work Board of Education.

# UPP Student Focus Groups: Campus Coordination

## Suggestions for Campus Coordinators to Improve the UPP Experience

### Findings

- While most students reported the campus coordinator did everything possible to make the UPP experience better a few had some very concrete suggestions on how to make it even better:
  - ◇ *“Work with the newer counties and explain how the UPP process works in greater detail to them.”*
  - ◇ *“Encourage more students to apply for UPP and don’t put as much emphasis on how hard it is to get into the program. I almost didn’t try because I thought it was impossible to get it.”*
  - ◇ *“Revamp the application process to be done at the end of the last semester of the junior year, so we know prior to the senior year if we got into UPP and where our placement will be.”*
  - ◇ *“Bring UPP graduates into our class to talk to the students.”* This suggestion was mentioned several times.

### Analysis

- It is apparent the UPP students hold the coordinators in the highest regard. One comment from a student really sums up the very positive influence the coordinators have on their UPP students: *“I want to be her when I become a social worker.”*
- Other comments include:
  - ◇ *“Our coordinator is our support; she does it all and is a wonderful person.”*
  - ◇ *“I have met with my campus coordinator every other week since my junior year. He frequently stops in to see how we are doing and always brings humor to our day. The pizza is also greatly appreciated.”*
- The UPP Coordinators have two very important roles - advocating for the students and recruiting placements at PCSAs - and both must be fulfilled successfully for the program to succeed. To be able to do this successfully depends upon the mutual respect between the PCSAs and the campus coordinators. Both the PCSAs and the campus coordinators are to be commended for the success of this program.

## Planning for a Child Welfare Career: Seeking Employment in a PCSA

### Findings

- 83% of UPP students indicated they will seek employment in a PCSA (50 out of 60).
- 16% of UPP students delayed entry into the job market because they are planning to attend graduate school or for personal health issues.
- A very small percentage of students decided not to pursue child welfare as a career.
- 22% aspire to become supervisors (13 out of 60).
- 52% indicated an interest in attending graduate school (MSW) at some point in their career (31 out of 60).
- The number of UPP students seeking employment in a PCSA is consistent with data from previous focus groups.
- 57% of the students indicated they would be willing to relocate to find employment in a PCSA (34 out of 60).
- 5% indicated they might consider relocation (3 out of 60).
- Factors influencing moving included pay and opportunity for career advancement.
- 38% of the students said they would only be interested in local employment, which for many included surrounding counties (23 out of 60).

### Analysis

- These findings are consistent with the purpose of UPP, which is to prepare students for careers in child welfare.
- If child welfare is not a good fit for a student, his/her decision not to enter the field should also be considered a success for the program. Even though students might not choose to go into child welfare, their participation in UPP has provided them with unprecedented exposure to the field which will benefit them (and child welfare) no matter what field of social work they pursue.
- It is a positive indication that almost 60% of the students are willing to relocate to obtain employment. This is especially true for the more traditional students.
- Since a significant number of UPP students reported that they were not willing to relocate for employment, efforts should be made to recruit students from smaller, rural counties who thus far have been under-represented in the UPP student population. For example, UPP universities operating branch campuses could include information about the UPP program in their recruitment activities for those branches. Attention could also be paid to recruiting potential UPP students from two year colleges. Additionally, PCSAs could include information about the UPP program when conducting formal and informal local recruitment efforts to hire staff.



# UPP Student Focus Groups

## Students' Overall Comments about UPP

### **Findings**

- Overall, students' comments about UPP were overwhelmingly positive:
  - ◇ *"I am grateful for the UPP opportunity. My coordinator did a great job, and I have a career at the end of the experience."*
  - ◇ *"Extremely beneficial. UPP has a lot of good components if one is dedicated to child welfare — opportunities you would not get in other places."*
  - ◇ *"UPP students are very well prepared to do the work of child welfare and probably any other type of social work as well."*
  - ◇ *"Junior program was very valuable. I feel better prepared for the work and placement because of it."*
- Many students also mentioned the value of them being able to attend the PCSAO Conference;
  - ◇ *"PCSAO Conference allowed us to network with other agencies and service providers and also talk to counties about job opportunities."*

### **Analysis**

- While the students welcomed the opportunity to share their feedback about their experience in UPP, it was apparent they were interested in the future of the program as well. Many students volunteered to speak to social work classes to recruit future UPP students and to talk to current UPP classes about what to expect.
- It was also apparent many of the campus coordinators took the feedback of the students to heart and made plans to address concerns or issues brought up by the students (if it was in their power to do so).
- Finally, another benefit of the CW 1 and 2 classes is that many social workers who may never work in child welfare have in-depth knowledge about child welfare that will help them in their careers and in their interactions with child welfare agencies and clients

## Points of Action

### UPP Database

Data on all students who apply or are admitted into the UPP should be entered into the database to ensure accurate data reporting and record keeping.

### Course Analysis

Efforts should be made to continue to implement Caseworker Core revisions into the child welfare Courses, specifically:

- Incorporate all recommended readings.
- Incorporate recommended assignments.
- Develop a plan to ensure all UPP students attend SACWIS learning labs.

### Focus Groups

#### **Action in Progress:**

- UPP coordinators are currently identifying strategies to help students complete learning contracts in a more relevant and useable manner.
- UPP coordinators are currently developing guidelines on how to conduct UPP-specific field seminars for those universities interested and able to do so.

#### **Recommended Action:**

- Routinely review recruitment strategies to ensure all social work students have the information necessary to pursue UPP if so desired.
- Target recruitment strategies and materials to highlight the many reasons UPP students pursued the program.
- Adopt a standardized application process to include screening and interviewing processes that occur one semester prior to the UPP placement beginning.
- Consider future research to determine if UPP students are hired into the same type of unit in which they completed their field experience.
- Provide individualized training on how to use the learning contract as a tool to support learning for field supervisors.
- Develop a model field experience program to support agency field supervisors and interns placed there.
- Recruit students from smaller, more rural counties to increase the likelihood that there will be students seeking employment in such counties.